

## Study provides snapshot of Perth happiness

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New research findings from Murdoch University are providing a glimpse into how the people in Perth are feeling about their lives.

PhD candidate Jane Genovese said results from 440 online surveys and 30 personal interviews have provided a snapshot of modern life in the hectic city.

"While similar studies of social wellbeing have been done elsewhere in Australia, this is the first to look at Western Australia," she said.

"We wanted to get an accurate and broad look at people's lives, which is why we designed a robust survey of 150 questions and put it on-line for everyone who wanted to provide input to contribute."

Key findings include:

- 50.3 per cent of people say the demands of everyday life get them down;
- 43.8 per cent say maintaining close relationships has been difficult and frustrating for them;
- 36.3 per cent often feel lonely because they have few close friends with whom to share their concerns;
- 59.8 per cent feel worried about what others think of them;
- 33.9 per cent feel people they know have gotten more out of life than they have;
- 36.5 per cent do not have a good sense of what they are trying to accomplish in life;

Surprisingly, while 87.4 per cent of people felt they were in charge of their lives, 59.8 per cent felt overwhelmed by their responsibilities and 62 per cent agreed that there were not enough minutes in the day.

"It seems like a paradox that 90 per cent of people felt in charge of their situation in life and yet 60 per cent felt overwhelmed by their responsibilities," Ms Genovese said.

"It suggests that people are knowingly making decisions to take on too much.

"In the interviews, we got some sense as to why. For example, a number of people felt they had to work long hours to give their kids the best start in life and be a good role model, yet felt guilty about being away from them."

While the survey has raised issues of concern, roughly 80 per cent of respondents said that when they looked at 'the story of their lives' they felt pleased with how things had turned out.

"It wasn't all doom and gloom, but clearly there are areas where individuals may need to take stock and make some changes," Ms Genovese said.

In the final phase of her PhD, Ms Genovese will be looking at potential applications for her data.

Provided by Murdoch University

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